



The **Virginia Comprehensive Assistance Network [VA CAN]** is a partnership of State, Federal and non-profit agencies and programs to benefit Virginia businesses. **VA CAN** is designed to facilitate communication both among its members and the business community.

Its **mission** is to provide businesses with easy access to all providers of business information, services and assistance. The Network provides a vehicle for its partners to cooperate and leverage their individual resources.

**VA CAN** is an outgrowth of the “Small Business Assistance Provider’s Forum II” that was sponsored by the VA Department of Environmental Quality’s [DEQ] Small Business Assistance Program and held in October 2002. **VA CAN** was initially modeled after similar networks in Delaware and New Jersey. **VA CAN** was officially established at its first meeting in November 2002. Since that time, it has held meetings every other month.

On May 13, 2003, **VA CAN** held the “**VA CAN** Business Assistance Showcase” at Radford University. The Radford University, Business Assistance Center was host of the event and one of the primary sponsors with DEQ's Small Business Assistance Program and the Pollution Prevention Program. Other sponsors of the event were: the Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department; Virginia's Philpott Manufacturing Extension Partnership; Virginia Department of Labor and Industry; Virginia Center for Innovative Technology; Virginia Department of Professional and Occupational Regulations; Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; Manufacturing Technology Center; Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation; Virginia Assistive Technology Loan Fund Authority; Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services; Internal Revenue Service; USEPA Region III Business Assistance Center; and the Virginia Department of Minority Business Enterprise.

Each of the sponsors along with other **VA CAN** partners presented a trade show of 20 exhibitors providing information about the programs and services available to the businesses. Not only were the members of **VA CAN** able to network with the businesses but also with each other.

**VA CAN** currently has more than 30 members and continues to seek new members and opportunities to become better informed providers, and to leverage resources to provide direct service to the businesses in the Commonwealth. It has developed various materials, including: a directory that lists its members, their services, web-sites and how to contact each; a brochure describing **VA CAN**; and a display booth for various events.

Should you wish to join or have questions, please feel free to contact Richard Rasmussen at [804] 698-4394.